

RACIAL CONFLICT IN LAGRAVENESE'S *FREEDOM*

WRITERS: A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE



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ACCEPTANCE

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Accepted by the Board of Examiners

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Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta

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SUMMARY

DEVI FITRIANI. A 320 070 043. RACIAL CONFLICT IN LAGRAVENESE'S *FREEDOM WRITERS*: A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE. RESEARCH PAPER. SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION. MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA. 2012.

This study is aimed to show the racial conflict in *Freedom Writers* movie by using sociological perspective. It is done by establishing two objectives: the first is analyzing the movie based on its structural elements and the second is analyzing the movie based on the sociological analysis.

This research is qualitative research. The types of data of the study are texts and images taken from two data sources: primary and secondary. The primary data source is *Freedom Writers* movie directed by Richard LaGravenese. The secondary data sources are other materials related to the primary data and the social background of American society in the last twentieth and early twenty first century.

The study comes to the following conclusion. Firstly, based on the structural analysis, the study concludes that in this movie, the director delivers the audience a moral message that sacrifice for others is sometimes necessary, disregarding the categories of race, ethnicity, or nationality. Secondly, based on the sociological analysis, the study infers that the production of the movie is related to diverse nature of America society.

Keywords: Racial Conflict, *Freedom Writers*, Sociological Perspective.

INTRODUCTION

A. Problem statement

The problem statement in this research is “How the racial conflict is reflected in LaGravenese *Freedom Writers*?”

B. Limitation of the Study

In this research, the researcher focuses this research in analyzing the racial conflict as reflected in *Freedom Writers* movie using a sociological perspective.

C. Objective of the Study

Based on the problem statement above, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1) To analyze the *Freedom Writers* based on the structural elements of the movie.
- 2) To analyze the *Freedom Writers* based on the sociological perspective.

D. Benefits of the Study

The writer hopes this research will be beneficial for the readers and other researchers generally. The benefits of this study are:

1) Theoretical Benefit

This study is expected to give additional information and contribution to the large body of knowledge, particularly to the further studies of *Freedom Writers* movie by Richard LaGravenese.

2) Practical Benefit

This study is aimed to give deep understanding in applying sociological perspective in literature. And this research tries to explain about social conflict especially racial conflict that occurred because of the different of race, and skin color. So this research can be moral studies for the reader and the writer.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method of this research paper is divided into five aspects:

(1) type of the study, (2) Object of the study, (3) type of data and data source, (4) technique of the data collection, and (5) method of the data analysis.

1) Type of the Study

In this research, the writer uses a qualitative research. Qualitative study is the study of the fact that involves individual behavior and the result of the study cannot be fact using numbers in analyzing.

2) Object of the Study

The object of the research is *Freedom Writers* movie. This movie is directed by Richard LaGravenese.

3) Type of the Data and the Data Source

Types of the data are the form of script and the image of the movie entitled *Freedom Writers* directed by Richard LaGravenese. The writer divides the data source into two categories: primary data and secondary data source.

a) Primary Data Source

The primary data source of the study is *Freedom Writers* movie that is directed by Richard LaGravenese and produced by Danny DeVito, Michael Shamberg, and Stacey Shen.

b) Secondary Data Source

The secondary data source is other source related to the primary data source. Data sources are information about the movie, and the social historical background of American society in twentieth century that supports this analysis.

4) Technique of the Data Collection

The technique of collecting data is library digital research. The data from both primary and secondary data sources are collected and by watching the movie and collected from the books related to the topics. The techniques of collecting data are as follows:

- a) Watching the movie several times until the writer caught the information or the data to be analyzed.
- b) Reading the movie script.
- c) Reading some related books to find out the theory data and information required.
- d) Browsing to the Internet to get several information and articles related to the research.
- e) Taking notes the data and taking the picture of important parts.
- f) Arranging the important data that related the research and develop them to be a good unity.
- g) Drawing conclusion based on the data analysis.

5) Technique of the Data Analysis

The writer uses sociological perspective and applies it by using the descriptive analysis. In addition, the writer also uses the structural analysis of the work. Firstly, the data are arranged in a list of data. Secondly, the researcher is looking for a selecting the relevant of the data by using the chosen approach. Thirdly, all data from the second step are arranged. Finally, a conclusion is drawn.

RESULT OF THE RESEARCH

Based on the structural analysis, LaGravenese wants to deliver a message that the real sacrifice is the useful action for us and others without seeing the skin color. He delivers a critic for the government and the American society. Many people think that they are different with other race. Many people place the Whites in the top place and the Blacks in the bottom place. The governments do not take the best regulation to solve the problems. Whites get many opportunities in their lives than other. In this movie, he tries to change the people's opinion. He wants to say that many ethnics can be united. The Blacks, Hispanic, and Cambodian have the same ability with Whites. The governments have to give the same opportunity for Black, Hispanic, and Asian as Whites. He also tries to give the problem solving. He said that the changes start from the education activities.

The character and the characterization that are created are appropriate with the story. The character of Eva, Marcus, Cindy, and other students are appropriate as the member of gang. They are not respect each other's, they speaks harshly with the other groups. They are loyal with their ethnic or race. They always protect their own to get the higher prestige and the larger territory. The character of Erin Gruwell is also appropriate. She is created to be a kind people with the high respect, passion, and self confidence. She is competent to be a teacher who can change the opinion of their students. She is not emotional and she has big empathy for others. The

character of Margaret shows that the governments agree with the different of skin color. They create the integration system but they do not give the clear regulation for the students in that school. It means that the government is not serious to make a good change.

The settings of place and time are appropriate with the condition. The director takes the place in Los Angeles especially in Long beach. In that place, the society has high race discrimination. The director takes the time between 1992 and 1994. In the fact, in 1992 at Los Angeles, a big riot happened. It is Rodney king riots that shows the race discrimination. The riots happened because the White polices who fight the Black racer named Rodney was freed by the court. It shows that there are any different treatment between Whites and others. The court decision make the racial conflict was happened in Los Angeles. The real condition is appropriate that the director takes the setting of time and place in Los Angeles at 1992 and 1994. It because this movie shows many racial conflict that was felt by the students.

The plot that is arranged by the director is good. He chooses the beginning of the story is the Rodney riots. It leads the viewer to know what the story in the movie. Then he creates conflicts in the teaching learning activities. It shows that the gang's life is not good because they are not respect the other and did not need an education. The other conflict is when Eva has to choose to protect Paco or tell the truth. It is appropriate with the social condition that many people always try to protect their group although

they are wrong. Then he gives the resolution. The best resolution is come from the teaching ways of Erin. It changes the opinion of her students. Many inspiration stories from Museum of Tolerance and Miep Gies influenced Eva to tell the truth always her soul is threatened.

The point of view is first person. The most narration is delivered by Eva. The writer think it is not appropriate. It is because each of major character has problem. It is better when the narration is delivered by the other people who are not act in this movie. The movie will be better and the viewer will more understand with the story and the messages that want to deliver.

The *mise en scene* that was used in this movie is good. The sett dressing and the properties are appropriate with the stories. Sett dressing of the room 203, the honor class, the Museum of Tolerance, the Long Beach district, and others are appropriate. Many accessories that are used support the place and make the viewer enjoy to see the movie. The properties that are used by the character are also good. The character is not using the luxurious accessories. It shows the real condition of the gang's society and the teacher's life. The costume and makeup of the character is casual and formal. The casual costume is for the students and the teacher uses the formal costume. It is also appropriate because most of students are less education and the teacher is well-educated. The lighting is divided into two. The bright lighting is when the activities were happen in the noon. The dark

lighting is when the activities happen at the night. The characters play their characterization with their soul.

The quality of the shot is good. This movie is based on the true story. The writer thinks that the decision of the director and producer are appropriate with the condition. This movie does not need many animations supporting like the other movies. It is because this movie does not tell an imagination but it tells the real story that happened.

Based on the sociological analysis, LaGravenese reflects the condition of the American society in his movie production. He reflects the fact that many people with different race and social class live in America. American societies live in the diversity. He wants to deliver a message that many fighting and hostility based on the race and social structure still happen in America. A big country that declares the pluralism cannot give a guarantee for the minorities.

He reflects the fighting and hostility happen because of the injustices treatment. Many opportunities, the decisions, the social services, and the others are based on the race. Each race does not respect the other. They only do an effort for their group's necessity without seeing the right and the wrong. In the other side, the White gets more opportunities to work, to get education, and to improve their life than Black, Hispanic, and other minorities. The minorities can be a defendant and be caught by the police without doing anything. The life of minorities is not peace. They fight each other to get respect and territory.

He wants to say that everybody has the same ability to improve his life. It is not based on the race to facilitate them so that they can reach their dreams and improve their life to be better than before. From the character of Erin he wants to assert that the different race can be united if the other has empathy for their problem and do an action to lose the bad differences that make them not respect each other.

He wants to deliver a critic for the American society. The empathy of the society is weak. They do not care with the situation that happen in other's life. They only think their life and need without seeing the other. They do not care the environment that is full of fighting and hostility. They do not want to find a solution to unite them. They only can judge them and said that the minorities are the wrong and destroyer people.

He also delivers a critic for the government. The government is less care for the minorities. The policy that is determined is not obvious in the real life of the society. Government of the central and the district have to create the best relation to solve the social problems. If the society and the government increase their caring to other, the real pluralism will be created in America. The society will be lived in the peace diversity. They will respect and have big empathy each other. The injustices treatment does not happen. The law will be applied based on the fact not based on the race.

CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATION

A. Conclusion

First, based on structural analysis, the director has successfully delivered the moral message that the best sacrifice is the useful action for us and others without seeing the skin color. The structural elements of the movie support the story. LaGravenese finds the strong character to act the different race and the fighting. The plot and the setting that are shown are appropriate with the real condition. The aspects of *mise-en-scene* prove the story of the movie like the real things. The *mise-en-scene* creates the real condition in the movie. Many aspects of the movie make the audience can understand and get the message easily.

Second is based on the Sociological analysis, this film indicates the relation between the movie production and the reality of American society. It reflects the condition of the American society that many fighting and hostility still happen based on the race. They do not respect each other. They do an effort to protect and fulfill the necessity of their group not depend on the right or wrong action. In the other hand, White has more opportunities to improve their life than other minorities. He wants to deliver critics for the American society and the government. He has a critic for the American society that they do not have empathy for the other's problem. The government does not have the obvious rule to solve the social problem that happened. He said that if the

society and the government take care of the social problem, they will be lived peacefully in the diversity.

B. Pedagogical Implication

From the all previous analysis, this research has a pedagogical implication. This movie shows that the different race and background can be united. The researcher thinks that this analysis is useful to solve the fighting problems of the Indonesian students.

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TESTIMONY

In this opportunity, the researcher states that in this research paper, there is no plagiarism of the previous literary work which has been raised to obtain Bachelor Degree of University, nor there are opinions or masterpieces which have been written or published by others, except referred written in this research paper and mentioned in the bibliography.

If it is proved that there are mistakes in the researcher's statement above later in the future, the researcher will be wholly responsible.

Surakarta, October, 2012

The researcher



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